

What's News?

Purpose

Students will analyze the effect on the viewer of images, text, and sound in electronic journalism and identify the techniques used to achieve the effects. Students will also determine a speaker's attitude toward a subject.

Materials

For the teachers: poster-sized K-W-L chart, teacher-created form with a list of the various observations that the students make during their viewing (see activity C #2)

For the students: Internet access, a copy of the observation form, paper, pencils

Activity

A. Pre-Activity Preparation

1. Identify an event of interest to students (i.e. World Trade Center bombing, school uniforms, etc.).
2. Identify 3-4 websites (CNN, MSNBC, local networks) that students will be able to search, in order to gather information about the chosen event.

B. Pre-Activity Discussion

1. Ask students to list what they already know about this event.
2. Write their information on a poster-sized K-W-L chart.

C. What's News?

1. Tell students that they will be searching various sites (CNN, etc.) in order to watch coverage from different sources about the chosen event.
2. While watching the various clips that they find, students will fill in the teacher-created observation form, including the following information:
 - headlines superimposed on the screen
 - background music
 - look of the newscast
 - which facts are presented
 - which guests are chosen to give information
 - verbal cues given by the newscasters
 - nonverbal cues given by the newscasters

Technology Literacy Standards

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
1			X				X
2		X					X
3	X						
4						X	
5							
6		X					
7							
8						X	
9						X	
10							
11							
12							
13				X			
14							
15				X			
16							

☒ = This Technology Literacy Standard is addressed in this lesson.

☐ = This Technology Literacy Standard is not addressed in this lesson.

3. Divide students into groups of two or three. Have the groups discuss their observations. Questions to consider might include:
 - Which features did the reports have in common?
 - What were some of the differences?
 - Which features made the coverage interesting to the viewer?
 - What were the correspondents' attitudes toward the subject they were covering? What verbal or nonverbal cues revealed their attitudes?

D. Close the Activity

1. Have the students write a paper regarding their observations, with special emphasis on what they learned about electronic media from watching the news coverage and discussing it with their groups.
2. As a class, discuss what the students learned and add to the K-W-L chart.